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All Suffering SOON TO END!

At some time in your life, you have likely asked, "Why all the suffering? For thousands of years, the human family has suffered greatly from wars, poverty, disasters, crime, injustice, sickness, and death. The past hundred years have seen more suffering than ever before. Will all of this ever end?"

The comforting answer is yes, and very soon! God's Word, the Bible, proclaims: "The wicked one will be no more . . . But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." For how long? "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Psalm 37:10, 11, 29.

After God removes wickedness and suffering, the earth will be transformed into a paradise. Then people will be able to live forever in perfect health and happiness. God's Word foretells: "[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore."—Revelation 21:4.

In that new world, even dead ones will be brought back to life to share in those blessings: "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) That is why Jesus Christ could tell a repentant evildoer who expressed faith in him: "You will be with me in Paradise."—Luke 23:43.

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Why Did Suffering Start?

Since God purposed for humans to have such a marvelous future, why did he permit suffering to start? Why has he allowed it for so long?

When God created Adam and Eve, He made them perfect in body and mind. He put them in a paradise garden and gave them satisfying work to do. The Bible states: "God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) If they had obeyed God, they would have produced perfect children, and the earth would have become a global paradise, where people would live forever in peace and happiness.

God implanted in Adam and Eve the wonderful gift of free will as part of the human makeup. They were not to be mindless robots. However, their continued happiness depended upon their using free will in the right way—to obey God's laws. God says: "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk." (Isaiah 48:17) Misuse of free will would result in catastrophe, since humans were not created to be successful independent of God. The Bible says: "To earthing man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step."—Jeremiah 10:23.

Sadly, our first parents felt that they could be independent of God and still be successful. But when they pulled away from God's rulership, he no longer sustained them in perfection. So they

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began to degenerate until finally they got old and died. Consistent with the laws of genetics, we have inherited that imperfection and death.—Roman 5:12.

The Main Issue—Sovereignty

Why did God not destroy Adam and Eve and start over with another human pair? Because God universal sovereignty, that is, his right to rule, had been challenged. The question was, Who has the right to rule, and whose rule is right? By extension, Could humans do better if not ruled by God? In allowing them enough time to experiment with total freedom, God would establish once and for all whether they are better off under his rule or their own. The time allowed had to be long enough for humans to try all types of political, social, economic, and religious systems apart from God's guidance.

What has been the result? Thousands of years of human history tell us that there has been more and more suffering. In the past century, the human family has experienced the worst suffering ever. Millions were murdered during the Holocaust. Over 100 million have been slaughtered in wars. Crime and violence are rampant. Drug abuse is epidemic. Sexually transmitted diseases continue to spread. Tens of millions die each year of hunger and disease. Family life and moral values have broken down everywhere. No human government has the answers to these problems. Not one of them has overcome aging, sickness, and death.

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The human condition is just as the Bible foretold our times. God's Word identifies our era as "the last days" of this system of things when "criticisms hard to deal with will be here." And just as the Bible said, 'wicked men and impostors have advanced from bad to worse.' —2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13.

Offering Is Near Its End

All the evidence shows that we are nearing the end of man's tragic experiment in independence from God. It has been clearly demonstrated that rulership by humans apart from God can never succeed. Only God's rulership can bring peace, happiness, perfect health, and everlasting life. So Jehovah's toleration of wickedness and suffering is nearing its end. Soon God will intervene in human affairs by destroying this entire unsatisfactory system of things.

Bible prophecy says: "In the days of those kings I set up a kingdom [in heaven] the God of heaven brought to ruin. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms [present rulerships], and itself will stand to times indefinite." (Daniel 2:44) The vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty, his right to rule, by his heavenly Kingdom is the central theme of the Bible. Foretelling a key part of the end of "the last days," Jesus said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." —Matthew 24:14.

When the end comes, who will survive? The Bible answers: "The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth." (Proverbs 2:21, 22) The upright are those who learn Jehovah's will and do it. Jesus Christ said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Yes, "the world is passing away . . . , but he that does the will of God remains forever." —1 John 2:17.

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